per the latest estimates of the Planning Commission, 42.7% of rural population in Bihar is below the poverty line as compared to 33.4% of the entire country. The case of Orissa is even worse where the level of rural poverty is as high as 48.3%. As per data available from 43 round of NSSO survey on employment/unemployment, the incidence of usual principal status unemployment in rural Bihar is 2.40% which is lower than that of the rural areas of Assam, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

As regards the level of other indicators of backwardness of rural areas, though Bihar is backward, it is not the worst-affected. Bihar's level of rural literacy is better than that of Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Bihar has a lower level of infant mortality than Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

(c) and (d) The funds to State Governments are earmarked on the basis of comprehensive criteria which include the total population of the State, incidence of poverty, percentage of SC/ST population to total population, percentage of agricultural labourers to the main workers and inverse of agricultural productivity.

Import of Edible Oils

1995. SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to curtail the import of edible oils in view of the bumper crop of oil seeds and to encourage the use of indigenous vanaspati oils; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) The import of edible oil has already been suspended by the Government for the time being.

Expenditure on Rural Development Schemes

1996. DR. PARSHURAM GANGWAR: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) the rural population in the country as per the latest census;

(b) the percentage of national income being spent on rural development schemes at present; and

(c) the steps taken to increase the expenditure on rural development schemes keeping in view the proportion of the rural population?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The provisional rural population of India according to 1991 census is 627.1 million.

(b) The National Accounts Statistics do not present separate estimates of investment in rural and urban areas. However estimates of net domestic product (NDP) in rural and urban areas are made for the census years. The rural NDP was 58.85 per cent of the aggregate NDP of the country in 1980-81.

(c) The plan expenditure on rural development programmes during Sixth Five Year Plan was Rs. 2782 crores. This was raised to 10956 crores in the Seventh Five Year Plan. Besides the rural development programmes, the schemes under the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) are mainly for the benefit of rural areas. The plan expenditure on MNP was raised from Rs. 6497 crores in Sixth Plan to Rs. 13743 crores in Seventh Plan. In addition, rural areas also benefit from general developmental programmes which include investments in agriculture, irrigation, energy, transport, health, education, etc.